

VZCZCXYZ0181  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHC #0292 0630337  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 030337Z MAR 08  
FM SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC  
TO RHMCSUU/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0361  
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE  
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 3452  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1270  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1137  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 1706  
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2279

UNCLAS ASHGABAT 000292

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, EUR/ACE, DRL

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [EFIN](#) [SOCI](#) [TX](#)  
SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: NGO FINDS WORK-AROUND TO  
BUREAUCRATIC MESS

REF: ASHGABAT 0181

¶1. (U) SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. NOT FOR PUBLIC INTERNET.

¶2. (SBU) DURING A ROUTINE VISIT TO A LOCAL NGO ON FEBRUARY 16, ECONOFF SAW THAT THE ORGANIZATION'S OFFICE WAS CLOSED FOR "INSPECTION" BY THE MINISTRY OF TRADE. ON FEBRUARY 20, ECONOFF RAN INTO ONE OF THE EMPLOYEES IN THE OFFICE BUILDING AND FOUND OUT THAT THE ORGANIZATION IS STILL WORKING -- WITH THE OFFICE APPEARING TO BE SEALED -- WITH THE AGREEMENT OF THE BUILDING ADMINISTRATION. THE MINISTRY OF TRADE SEALED THE NGO'S OFFICE FOR NONPAYMENT OF RENT. THE NGO RUNS ON A SHOESTRING BUDGET AND WAS BROKE, BECAUSE IT COULD NOT RECEIVE GRANT MONEY UNTIL IT OBTAINED A "GRANT CERTIFICATE," A DOCUMENT THAT FORMERLY CAME FROM THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE (MOEF) AS PROOF OF THE GRANT'S REGISTRATION. THE DIVISION OF MOEF INTO THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT (REFTEL) OCCURRED BEFORE THE NEW MINISTRIES DECIDED WHICH WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ISSUING GRANT CERTIFICATES. THE NGO EMPLOYEES EXPECTED THINGS TO BE SORTED OUT BY THE END OF THE WEEK. HOWEVER, TWO WEEKS LATER, AFTER SUBMITTING FIVE LETTERS TO THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE, ALL WRITTEN PER THE MINISTRY'S EXPLICIT INSTRUCTIONS, THE OFFICE IS STILL OFFICIALLY SEALED. REGULAR OUTSIDE VISITORS TO THIS NGO'S LIBRARY KNOW THAT IT IS STILL OPEN FOR BUSINESS, AND THE VISITORS GIVE THE NGO NOTICE BY CALLING BEFORE ARRIVAL.

¶3. (SBU) COMMENT: THE NGO EMPLOYEES WERE NOT AT ALL RATTLED -- JUST BUSINESS AS USUAL. HOWEVER, THEIR COURAGE UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES WAS ADMIRABLE -- SECRET DOOR KNOCKS, PEERING CAREFULLY OUT THE OFFICE DOOR DOWN A DARK HALLWAY FOR MINISTRY EMPLOYEES OR STRANGERS. AS IN MUCH OF THE FORMER SOVIET WORLD, ALL IS NOT AS IT APPEARS. BUREAUCRATIC STUMBLING BLOCKS ARE NOT FINAL, BUT SIMPLY TEMPORARY BARRIERS THAT NEED SOME CREATIVE THOUGHT IN ORDER TO FIND A WAY AROUND. END COMMENT.

